NYC Environmental Protection
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Carter Strickland, Commissioner

WEEKLY PIPELINE

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Proper Connections Inspections a Step in Right Direction

During the last decade, DEP and watershed communities have joined forces to install sewers in many upstate watershed areas, including the Town of Hunter. Since aging or faulty septic systems can negatively impact the watershed, these sewers better protect the quality of the city's drinking water supply. To handle the wastewater flow, DEP also provides town residents free sewage treatment services from the New York City-owned Tannersville Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Tannersville Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Though the treatment plant is designed to handle local sewage, it is not designed to process inflow that results from the discharge of clear water into the collection system. To minimize that issue, DEP has partnered with local officials to inspect sanitary sewer system connections, and other possible sources. Treating the inflow causes increased energy demand, which leads to an overall increase in facility operating costs. Inflow can be responsible for an increase of up to 25% or more of a plant's flow, and can lead to inefficient treatment due to dilution. During heavy rain events excess inflow can be attributed to sewer system overflows, which are detrimental to the watershed and its protection, and a community quality of life concern.

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety

Audit Finding of the Month

The annual HazCom/Right-to-Know refresher training and information is not provided to one electrician, four plumbers, six laborers, two clerical associates and one principal administrative associate at the facility.

The scheduling of employee annual EHS training is a relatively simple and easy corrective action to complete, but there can be confusion as to when the training should be given. You might think that the annual training requirement is met if training is provided between January 1 and December 31 of each year, but a different time period is used to determine when recurring annual training is due. Annual training must be given to an employee, 12 months from the last date the employee was trained, or within a reasonable amount of time (usually no more than 30 days) after this anniversary date. An employee who was given training on October 27, 2011 will be due for annual training no later than October 27, 2012, not December 31, 2012.

Bureau EHS keeps track of employee training due dates and sends reminders to schedule employees when training is due. Remember, the clock doesn't start with the beginning of a calendar year, but from the date of the employee's last training.

Annual EHS training is one of the most effective means to provide employees with an understanding of the potential hazards in the workplace and the corrective actions that can be taken to prevent adverse impacts.

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city.

CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH PIPELINE. HELP IS ON THE WAY.

Commissioner's Corner

Just over a year ago, DEP unveiled an ambitious plan to improve harbor water quality by drastically cutting combined sewer overflows over the next 20 years—the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan. It was based on the premise that the city needed to rethink how we tackled one of our most enduring harbor water quality problems. Rather than invest solely in end-of-the-pipe capture solutions, we would add to our significant sewer and treatment plant network by investing at the source areas where runoff is generated, by building projects that absorb rainwater before it enters the system. To do that, we proposed to invest a total of $2.4 billion of public and private money in green infrastructure projects. The goal is to get our city to capture the first inch of rainfall on 10% of impervious surfaces in combined sewer areas. Plus, green infrastructure comes with a whole host of other benefits like cleaner air, higher property values and less energy use. Before we could fully move forward on this innovative plan, we needed time and flexibility to build green infrastructure at sufficient scale to make a difference. This past week we got some great news. After a year of negotiation, the State Department of Environmental Conservation endorsed the concept in an amended consent order that has enforceable milestones for building green infrastructure within an adaptive management framework that allows DEP to develop contingency plans if any milestones are missed. The New York Times covered the announcement here and a public hearing is planned. This is a watershed moment (pun intended) in PlaNYC's vision of a greener, greater city, and I want to personally thank everyone within the agency who played a role in creating one of the largest green infrastructure programs in the country. If you want a full accounting of why we are doing this, read a timely oped that Deputy Mayor **Cas Holloway** and I penned on the topic here.

The Staten Island Bluebelts are an award winning program to handle stormwater through the use of natural features, like streams and ponds, rather than underground stormwater pipes. If this sounds at all familiar to the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, it is because the concept is essentially the same, just in separated sewer areas rather than in combined areas.

Recently DEP released our draft generic environmental impact statement for the Mid-Island Bluebelts in Staten Island, which will add more than 5,000 acres to the existing program in communities like Oakwood Beach, New Creek and South Beach. As we saw this past summer when Hurricane Irene occurred, these areas can be prone to severe flooding, and we believe this approach, which includes $263 million in funding over the next 10 years, will be a tremendous help. Since local elected officials and the community are our partners in this program, last week I sat down with Borough President **James Molinaro** and Council Member **James Oddo.** They stressed the need to speed up the acquisition of land to build Bluebelts, and we are exploring our options to make that happen.

As part of my continuing effort to meet DEP employees out in the field, this past week I visited the Coney Island Wastewater Treatment Plant and got a tour from Division Chief, East Operations **Ravi Basant** and Superintendent **Ojpal Auluck,** and met the plant's process control engineer, **Debra Iachetta.** The Coney Island plant reuses about 99% of its digester gas to produce more than two megawatts of energy daily, has a state of the art odor-control system at the plant to mitigate impacts on nearby residences, and has a new $21 million upgrade of its electrical substation. I also stopped by the Manhattan Pump Station, which provides the Newtown Creek WWTP with more than half of its flow—155 million gallons per day. DC **Vincent Sapienza,** Newtown Creek Superintendent **Jim Pynn,** and Stationary Engineer Electric **Horace Williams** showed me the $245 million upgrade, including five new 2,500 horsepower motors, that is being undertaken while the plant remains in operation—an amazing feat.

Focus on the Field

When talking about a stringent wastewater treatment process for the seven wastewater treatment plants DEP owns upstate, there is a special voice we can trust: Technical Advisor for Process for the Bureau of Water Supply **Matt Burd.** His experience includes 25 years at DEP, first at BWT and now at BWS, which sharpened his skills supervising the process so that treated wastewater discharges in the nearby streams have no impact in the NYC reservoirs. Matt's knowledge helps keep drinking water meeting high standards. His experience is also valuable in the planning of at least six major ongoing capital projects to upgrade the plants for high quality disinfection.

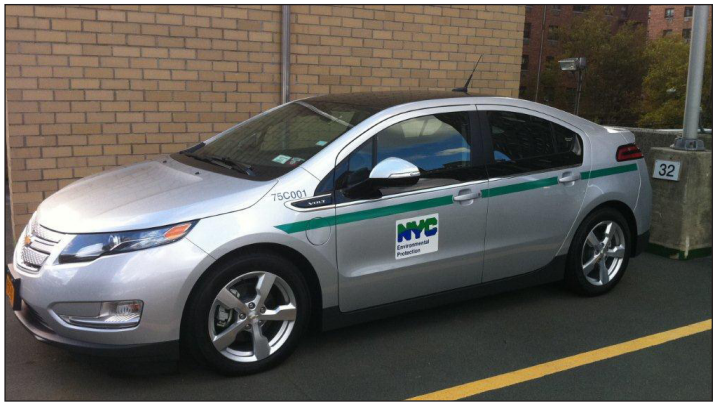
Matt's daily routine includes reviewing data on sludge for disposal and effluent quality to assure compliance with federal and state regulations. He is also in contact with DEC regulators about emergent situations such as the recent flooding at the Margaretville WWTP. One of his duties is to write project proposals, specifications or contracts for new capital projects and purchases. To make sure the most practical decisions are made, Matt meets often—in person and by phone—with BWS Wastewater Operations Division's operators and technical maintenance staff. "I am often the division's eyes and point of contact for the resulting purchases, consultant designs and construction, interacting with citizens, officials, consultants and DEP employees," said Matt.

One of the projects Matt is involved in is the reconstruction of the Port Jervis Wastewater Treatment Plant. His innovative thinking has led to cost efficiency and reduced energy use. "This planning is going to save at least $25 million from the total cost of the project," said Matt.

After years of working in NYC at the North River and Red Hook Wastewater Treatment Plants, Matt is now based in Kingston where his work takes him knee deep into Catskill mountain streams, where sewer crossing repairs are planned, or at a sewer treatment facility anywhere in a radius of six counties.

In his free time, Matt enjoys yoga, hiking the Catskills, rock climbing the Shawangunk Mountains, and spending time with his two sons.

Kodak Moment



PLUGGED IN: You gotta feel it…It's electric! DEP is staying 'current' as five new Chevrolet Volt vehicles recently joined its fleet. The electric-powered cars—which can be recharged in the Lefrak parking lot and at other recharging sites around the city—have a battery that allows driving gas-free for an estimated 35 miles. There's also an onboard gas generator that produces electricity so you can go up to a total of 340 additional miles on a full tank of gas, according to Chevy. DEP received grant money toward each of the cars. Air and Noise inspectors will be the first to use the Volts on a regular basis. Needless to say, they are 'charged' up about the idea of driving environmentally-friendly cars! New York City has the largest municipal electric vehicle fleet in the country.

Kudos Corner

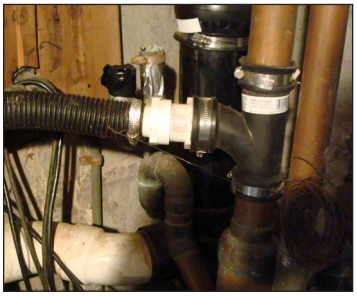
GREAT-'FELLAS': The national Operations Challenge for 2011 was held at the Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference in Los Angeles this past week. DEP's Owls Head Sludge Fellas participated: **Dennis Marotto, Jon Paul Lessard, William Sedutto** and **Maurice Minickene.** Though the first place finishers came from the Virginia Water Environment Association, we still know that our guys are the absolute best and represented DEP with class and distinction.

(Proper Connections Inspections a Step in Right Direction… continued)

This past summer, DEP and town officials knocked on more than 100 doors, inspecting and explaining to residents how direct connections of sump pumps and other sources of inflow increase the risk of overflows onto local streets, as well as overtaxing DEP-owned infrastructure. The residents were also reminded of town ordinances, drafted in cooperation with DEP, which require that improper connections are permanently removed. This program will serve as the pilot in the upstate watershed region to eliminate excess inflow and forge a better understanding between residents, town officials and DEP on the best ways to communicate and work together to eliminate inflow starting with system design through connection inspections and community awareness.

Some suspected sources of inflow included the improper connection of sump pumps and gutters from homes and businesses, which served as the focal point of the program. During the first twenty house inspections, a basement sump pump capable of delivering thousands of gallons per day of clean groundwater, or ten times the normal household sewage flow, was found and disconnected. The direct involvement of dedicated DEP staff with town officials and residents opens the door for further investigation and mitigation of other improper connections. The efforts of BWS Wastewater Operations Deputy Chief for Operations **Carl Davis,** Technical Advisor to the Chief of Wastewater **Matt Burd,** Tannersville Wastewater Treatment Plant Chief Operator **Fritz Carlson,** Assistant Chief Operator **Josh Jones,** plant staff, and Wastewater Division Administrative Assistant **Patricia Curry** handling the scheduling of inspections were key to the inspection process running smoothly.

An illegal sump pump connected to the sewer system.



Illegal connection to the sewer system.

This successful collaboration between DEP and local town officials has enabled all parties involved to gain a better understanding on ways to reduce inflow," said Deputy Commissioner **Paul Rush,** "and will be expanded to other city-owned upstate collection systems for inflow reduction."

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.